



Healthy Communities Delaware
Thriving Places. Thriving People.

Request for Proposals -- Small Grants for Improving Community Vital Conditions

Healthy Communities Delaware (HCD) is pleased to announce this Request for Proposals for work that improves Community [Vital Conditions](#) -- the things we all need, all the time, to be well and reach our full potential. Community Vital Conditions include: reliable transportation, thriving natural world, basic needs for health & safety, humane housing, meaningful work & wealth, lifelong learning, and belonging and civic muscle.

This funding aims to support projects that help to create thriving places for thriving people.



Key Information & Timeline

Funding Period:	October 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027 (9 months)
Award Amount Range:	\$10,000 - \$25,000
Application Deadline:	August 31, 2026

About HCD: Our Mission, Philosophy, & Core Investment Principles

Our Mission: We work with communities, investors and systems to create thriving places for thriving people.

Our Philosophy: We recognize that access to the vital conditions in every community is essential for well-being. We collaborate with communities with the greatest opportunities to improve health, well-being, and equity. We view our partners not as grant recipients, but as shared stewards of limited resources. We work together to advance community-driven transformation through our investments, which support communities by:

1. **Building Capacity for Change:** We fund the essential planning, coordination, and collaborative structures (like steering committees) needed to create and sustain complex community transformation.
2. **Driving Lasting Systemic Change:** We support projects that create lasting changes in local policies, systems, and environments.

Core Investment Principles: Successful proposals will embody the following core principles. If your community or project concept does not meet these criteria, the opportunity is likely not a good fit.

1. **Advance Equity & Prioritize Place:** We commit to investing in communities with the highest vulnerability and the greatest opportunities for improving equity.
2. **Guided by Evidence & Logic:** Projects must be supported by a compelling case, ideally using best-practice or evidence-based strategies that can be adapted to local contexts.

Core Concepts and Definitions

The Vital Conditions for Well-Being: The fundamental resources and the structural drivers of well-being that all people need to thrive (see table below). The Vital Conditions define the overarching goals that HCD seeks to achieve. HCD funds projects that strengthen these conditions strictly at the community-level via policy, systems, and environmental change. While services like tutoring or job placement support the Vital Conditions, HCD funding is not intended to support individual-level programs and services. Learn more about Vital Conditions [here](#).

Community-Level Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change or “Upstream”

Interventions: These are the transformative interventions that HCD funds. They target the root causes of problems by creating lasting changes in the laws, ordinances, regulations; practices, processes, and power dynamics; and built, natural, and economic environments within a specific geographic area. These changes are designed to impact the community population broadly and lead to equitable, long-term improvements in the Vital Conditions.

Urgent Services or “Downstream” Interventions: HCD **does not** fund these programs or services. They target the symptoms resulting from system failures, or address immediate crises or acute needs. Examples include operating a homeless shelter, providing a food pantry, offering financial assistance, or administering acute clinical or addiction care. See the table below to learn more about Urgent Services.



Vital Conditions (We DO Fund These)		Urgent Services (We DO NOT Fund These)	
Basic Needs for Health & Safety	Nutritious food, safe drinking water, fresh air; routine care for physical and mental health; routine physical activity; safe, satisfying sexuality and reproduction; freedom from crime, injury, violence, traumatic stress, and addiction	Acute Care for Illness or Injury	Acute and post-acute care for physical and mental illness; emergency medical services; acute hospitalization; trauma-informed care
Lifelong Learning	Continuous development of cognitive, social, and emotional abilities; early childhood experiences, K-12, higher education, and adult education.	Addiction Treatment	Services to stop addictive behavior and begin recovery; substance abuse treatment and support
Meaningful Work and Wealth	Rewarding work, careers, and standards of living; good-paying and fulfilling jobs; family and community wealth.	Crime Response	Efforts to fairly adjudicate alleged violations of the law; police, fire, and first responders; courts; incarceration
Humane Housing	Adequate space per person; safe structures; affordable costs; diverse neighborhoods.	Homeless Services	Short-term housing for people experiencing homelessness; emergency shelters
Thriving Natural World	Clean air, water, soil; healthy ecosystems; accessible natural spaces; freedom from extreme heat, flooding, wind, radiation, earthquakes, and pathogens	Environmental Clean-Up	Efforts to clean up hazards in air, water, soil, homes, workplaces, and communities; lead abatement; water treatment; brownfield contamination; disaster response and recovery
Reliable Transportation	Reliable, safe, and accessible transportation; close to work, school, food, leisure; active transport; efficient energy use; few environmental hazards	Unemployment and Food Assistance	Assistance for those who are disadvantaged, out of work, or disabled; federally supported programs for disadvantaged families; food banks, energy assistance, childcare assistance
Belonging and Civic Muscle			
Sense of belonging and power to shape a common world; social support; civic agency, engagement, and representation (voting, volunteering, public work); arts, culture, and spiritual life; freedom from stigma, discrimination, and oppression; support for civil and human rights; collective efficacy; civic science; transparency; communications, information technology, and social networking; politics and partisan discourse			

Eligibility Criteria

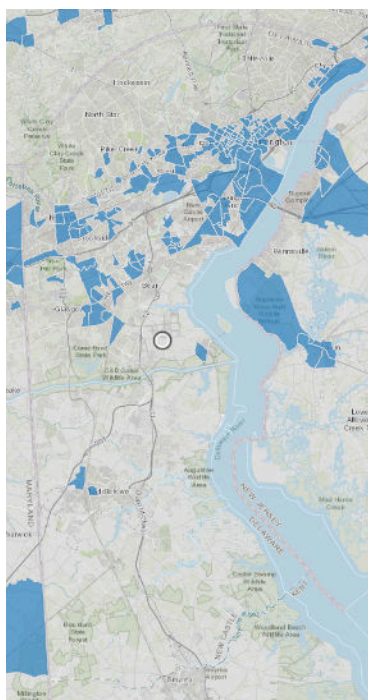
Applicants must meet the Eligibility Criteria or the proposal will not be considered for funding.

Criteria	Core Question to Answer in Proposal
Low-to-Moderate Income Community	Is the community served by this project located in a Census Block Group where 51% or more of residents are classified as Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI), according to HUD's Low-to-Moderate Income Population data ?
Lead Applicant Status	Is the lead applicant (or its Fiscal Agent) a 501(c)(3) or a municipality?

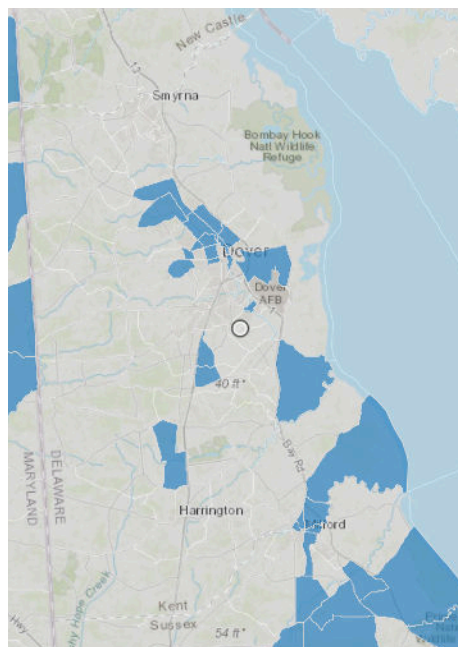
Q: How do I determine whether my project serves a Low-to-Moderate Income community?

Projects must be used for work in census tracts or census blocks groups where 51% or more of the residents are classified as Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI). Please refer to the information found in the [HUD's Low-to-Moderate Income Population data](#) or refer to the maps below to determine whether your project is eligible:

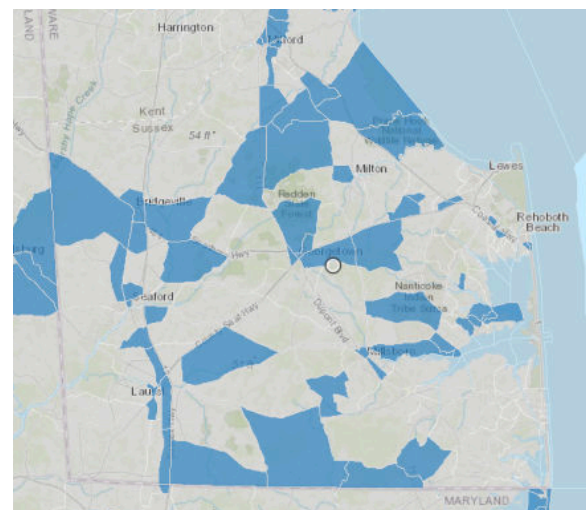
HUD's Low-to-Moderate Income Map by County



New Castle County



Kent County



Sussex County

Funding Exclusions

- General operating expenses
- Endowments
- Religious organizations for sectarian purposes (*However, projects that serve the entire community, regardless of religious affiliation, are eligible for support.*)
- Annual fundraising campaigns or general operating expenses
- Projects completed before the application deadline of this proposal
- Individuals
- Debt reduction
- For-profit businesses
- Purchase of office equipment, furniture or electronics (*Exceptions may occur at the Grants Committee's discretion, for projects that build and/or sustain an organization's technology infrastructure. Such projects must clearly demonstrate the impact of this investment.*)
- Direct lobbying
- Any organization or project that is inconsistent with the HCD mission, vision, values, and strategy
- Organizations or projects that unlawfully discriminate with regard to employees, volunteers, delivery of programs or services, or clients served based on age, sex, religion/creed, race, color, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, marital status, military or veteran status, pregnancy or genetic information

Budget Guidelines

- **Eligible Expenses:** Funding may be requested for capital, equipment, contracts, personnel and fringe, other justifiable direct project/implementation costs, and indirect costs. See restrictions above.
- **Project-Specific Staffing:** Funding must be applied toward staff time essential for achieving the scope of work outlined in the proposal; it is not for general organizational payroll.
 - For each entry, specify the title, the full time equivalent (FTE), the annual salary or hourly rate, and the total amount requested.
 - Fringe Benefits must be listed as a separate line item immediately following each salary entry.
- **Indirect Costs:** Indirect costs may not exceed 15% of the total request unless the applicant has a federally negotiated rate, which will be accepted.

Application Process & Timeline

Phase	Description and Resources	Date
RFP Release	Application materials will be available on the Delaware Community Foundation grant page .	July 31, 2026
Informational Webinar	Learn more about this opportunity. Register for the Information Webinar .	August 6, 2026 at 11 a.m.

Proposals Due	Proposals are due and must be submitted via the Delaware Community Foundation's website . The application question list is on the DCF grants webpage.	August 31, 2026
Review and Refinement	Proposals are reviewed by individuals on the review committee, and recommendations are made and agreed to by the full committee.	September 2026
Review & Agreements	All applicants are notified of award decisions. Grant Agreements are sent to awardees.	September 2026
Grant Start	Funding available for work beginning October 1, 2026	October 1, 2026

Reporting

HCD views reporting as a vital component of shared stewardship and accountability to the communities that we serve, as well as our investors. Grantees are expected to submit a final report detailing activities and outputs based on the work outlined in the proposal.

Contact and Inquiries

If you have questions that are not addressed in the RFP or informational webinar, please feel free to reach out to: Kate Dupont Phillips, Executive Director, Healthy Communities Delaware, Kate@HealthyCommunitiesDE.org